

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION[571]

Notice of Intended Action

Twenty-five interested persons, a governmental subdivision, an agency or association of 25 or more persons may demand an oral presentation hereon as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.4(1)“b.”

Notice is also given to the public that the Administrative Rules Review Committee may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this proposed action under section 17A.8(6) at a regular or special meeting where the public or interested persons may be heard.

Pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code subsection 455A.5(6), the Natural Resource Commission hereby gives Notice of Intended Action to amend Chapter 107, “Rabbit and Squirrel Hunting,” Iowa Administrative Code.

These rules stipulate the regulations for hunting rabbits and squirrels and include season dates, bag limits, possession limits, shooting hours, and areas open to hunting.

The proposed amendment closes the jackrabbit season statewide. Jackrabbits have not been counted on the August roadside survey during two of the last three years, and counts on the spring spotlight survey have also declined. The decline of the jackrabbit population is related to the decline of suitable habitat. Weather patterns since 2007 also may have contributed to the jackrabbit decline. White-tailed jackrabbits are considered extirpated in Missouri, and Nebraska closed its season from Grand Island to the Iowa border in 2006. Minnesota still has a season, although jackrabbit numbers there are also in long-term decline.

Studies in Iowa indicate that the few small jackrabbit populations that remain are not connected by suitable habitat. Thus, although hunting is not the cause for the statewide decline, additional mortality due to hunting may cause isolated populations to disappear.

Any interested person may make written suggestions or comments on the proposed amendment on or before June 21, 2011. Written comments may be directed to Wildlife Bureau Chief, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034; by E-mail at wildlife@dnr.iowa.gov; or by fax at (515)281-6794. Persons who wish to convey their comments orally may contact the Wildlife Bureau by telephone at (515)281-5034 or by visiting the fourth floor of the Wallace State Office Building during regular business hours.

There will be a public hearing on June 21, 2011, at 1 p.m. in the auditorium on the second floor of the Wallace State Office Building. At the public hearing, persons may present their views either orally or in writing. Participants will be asked to give their names and addresses for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of the amendment.

Any persons who intend to attend the public hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Department of Natural Resources and request specific accommodations.

After analysis and review of this rule making, no impact on jobs has been found.

This amendment is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 481A.38, 481A.39, and 481A.48.

The following amendment is proposed.

Amend rule 571—107.2(481A) as follows:

571—107.2(481A) Jackrabbit season. ~~Open season for hunting jackrabbits shall be from the last Saturday in October through December 1 of each year. Bag limit shall be 1 per day; possession limit 2. Legal hunting hours shall be from sunrise to sunset. Entire state open.~~ Continuous closed season.